


NANCY HANKS

2 of 2 - UNDATED

TRAWER 1A

MOTHER NANCY HANKS

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# Hanks Family

## Nancy Hanks (2)

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

March 6, 1870, Letter to Lamon.

"Lincoln and I had a case in the Menard Circuit Court which required a discussion on heridity, quality of mind, natures, etc. Lincoln's mind was dwelling on this case, mine on something else. Lincoln, all at once, said, 'Billy, I'll tell you something, but keep it a secret while I live.'" Herndon then claims that Lincoln told him *among other discredited things about the Banks family that* his mother was an illegitimate child whose father was a nobleman of Virginia, and after explaining that his mother had inherited the quality of the nobleness <sup>man</sup> and he (Lincoln) inherited these same qualities from his mother <sup>Herndon alleges</sup> Lincoln exclaimed:

*before* { R

"All that I am or hope ever to be I get from  
my mother. God bless her." <sup>R</sup> ~~This buggy ride according to~~  
~~Mr. Herndon took place in 1851. One would have to be~~  
~~blessed with a remarkable memory to recall the exact~~  
~~conversation which took place on an occasion twenty years~~  
~~before. Herndon made further comment, however, that~~  
~~"The manner of Lincoln I shall never forget - nor what~~  
~~he said, nor the place, whatever may become of him."~~

As late as January 19, 1886 Herndon was  
still writing about Lincoln's mother & his mother  
told him that the above date addressed to  
Jesse W. Herndon states that Lincoln  
told him.

"all that I am or hope ever to be.  
I got from my mother, God Bless Her."



when the three <sup>final version</sup> ~~version~~ work of Hemmels  
and with appeared in 1889 the version  
of the tribute which was undoubtedly approved  
by Hemmels ~~the tribute~~ appear in this  
form

"good bless my mother; all that  
I am or ever hope to be I owe to her"

For the past twelve years Lincoln Lore has  
been publishing each quarter a <sup>bibliography</sup> ~~check list~~ of new Lincoln  
items, using ~~the~~ chronological system of arrangement, ~~so~~ <sup>and</sup>  
~~the Lincoln National Life Foundation is especially pleased~~  
~~with the chronological method of enumeration in the Monaghan~~  
~~Bibliography.~~ It is needless to say that the <sup>approximately</sup> 1000 items  
listed by the Foundation in its 1930-1940 check list <sup>is</sup> was of  
great help to the compilers in locating <sup>of the new bibliographies.</sup> accurately the  
<sup>numbers during that decade which</sup>

The <sup>long number</sup> of books of that period, <sup>really as many as</sup> as appeared in the <sup>years</sup> ~~check list~~ <sup>of the new bibliographies.</sup>



It is very doubtful that the Bibliography  
Committee of the Lincoln Foundation Advisory Group <sup>will</sup> find  
it necessary to change their present method of selecting <sup>items</sup>  
~~to any extent~~ to be in harmony with the requirements of the  
new bibliography. This <sup>viewpoint</sup> is supported by the  
statement of the <sup>compiler</sup> ~~editor~~, Mr. Monaghan, <sup>who affirms</sup> that "The majority  
of the discarded titles (in Fish, Oakleaf, and Starr) are  
broadside, newspapers, supplements, excerpts from magazines,  
irrelevant accounts such as biographies of Douglas, etc."  
None of these <sup>discarded items</sup> with the possible exception of some <sup>few</sup> magazine  
<sup>in the</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>periodic</sup> excerpts have been accepted by the Bibliography Committee.

Advisory Group

~~It is not anticipated that~~ (As <sup>important</sup> valuable as the <sup>it is not anticipated</sup> new bibliography will prove to be, it will replace the works of Fish, Oakley, Starr and the Foundation bibliography, but will supplement them. A valuable help has been made available in checking the <sup>fast</sup> <sup>three</sup> ~~former~~ <sup>against</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>work</sup> ~~by the citation~~ <sup>by noting the identification numbers.</sup> There has been some expression of regret that the same treatment was not given to the items appearing in the Accumulative Bibliography published by the Foundation as ~~much as are found of the latter~~ ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> would have allowed a complete comparative study of the year 1940 with the <sup>of the</sup> 1827-1829 period.

One very valuable departure from the Fish,  
Oakleaf, and Starr plan is the eliminating of the name  
Lincoln as an author, and the substituting they name of  
compiler or editor. This relieves much confusion. The grouping,  
of all items in foreign tongue is also an improvement over  
other bibliographies and will create a new interest in foreign  
publications.

*of the new bibliography*  
Another added feature <sup>is</sup> the citing of various  
libraries <sup>in</sup> which the <sup>listed</sup> Lincoln items can be found. Of course, as  
a working basis for the bibliography the citation ~~I.H.L.~~ *I.H.L.*  
indicating the Illinois State Historical Library, is most  
often observed, but <sup>three</sup> forty-four <sup>are noted which</sup> other libraries also have  
items ~~not~~ found in the Illinois collection.

Although the pages in the introduction  
which display the symbols used in citing  
where the items listed in the bibliography can be  
found, may not have been published as a  
Directory of the larger collections of literature yet  
most of the outstanding institutional  
collections are ~~referred~~ <sup>recorded</sup>. Of the forty four  
libraries listed thirty are in institutions  
while the remaining fourteen personal libraries  
are among the best known collections of ~~books and pamphlets~~ <sup>books and pamphlets</sup> in private hands.



July 22 1866 to Hart  
Homer says he had  
"A love letter which he wrote to his  
sister at age of twenty three."  
Homer strikes out in it. Page 33

---

Nov 1, 1866, to Hart  
I have prepared a letter substituted  
this. I wrote to Sullivan -  
I have written note to along  
lines of Sullivan p 35

---

Nov 20 1866 to Amos  
Did you know Fenwick was  
living in this city in 1841  
p 37

---



Full of love  
I have no confidence in Ham, Hunt  
Bill Gun and some other

859

PS

gun is not a lion but a "regulator"  
exaggerator, etc

However, many San José like walls some of the  
the walls of San José.

page 51

Oct 24 1883

to Amolel

James, made a travel was in a buggy  
usually with an old horse - 3rd which he got of  
James Skent about 1843 - horse died about 1853-4

bought buggy came about 50 for James a  
commander of church

Oct 25 1875 She was an intelligent woman, an heroic woman  
in all the good causes, that has made the good for her country.

This was told me about 1852 three miles  
west of this city on our way to Court in  
Petersburg, Menard County and State of  
Illinois."

Hertz p 63

In the same letter of June 12, 1865 which Hill wrote to Herndon he claimed that W. G. Green had contributed something to the "Axis" story. Herndon called Green "Slippery Bill" and in a letter to Lamon (page 59) in the same book with the above letter Herndon wrote, "I have no confidence in Dennis Hanks, Bill Green and some others," and then in a postscript adds, "Green is not a liar, but a blow, a 'hifaluting' exaggerator, etc."

March 6 1870 Letter to Cairnes

"Lancelot and I had a case in the Menard  
around ~~case~~ which required a discussion on heredity  
quality of mind, natures, etc. Lancelot's name was  
swelling in this case, mine on something else, ~~finally~~  
at a ~~one~~ ~~time~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~day~~ ~~when~~ ~~the~~ ~~case~~ ~~was~~ ~~being~~ ~~heard~~ ~~that~~  
~~before~~ ~~what~~ ~~Lancelot~~ ~~and~~ ~~at~~ ~~once~~ ~~said~~, "Bully  
I'll tell you something, but keep it a secret which  
I like." ~~He~~ ~~then~~ ~~made~~ ~~the~~ ~~claim~~ ~~that~~ ~~Lancelot~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~son~~ ~~of~~ ~~his~~ ~~mother~~ ~~was~~ ~~an~~ ~~illegitimate~~ ~~child~~ ~~whose~~ ~~father~~ ~~was~~ ~~a~~ ~~problematic~~ ~~man~~ ~~of~~ ~~his~~ ~~age~~  
that his mother had inherited the qualities of the  
problematic ~~and~~ ~~G. (Lancelot)~~ ~~inherited~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~qualities~~  
for his mother ~~because~~ ~~Lancelot~~ ~~exclaimed~~



"This was told me about 1852 three miles west  
of this city on our way to court in Petersburg, Menard County,  
and State of Illinois."

### The Hart Version

Before Townsend interviewed Herndon, the latter had been carrying on a voluminous correspondence with Charles H. Hart, a Lincoln author. *who later read the Town* On April 13, 1866, Herndon wrote, "Oh what an admirable sweet good boyish record 'Abe' has left behind, i.e., his childhood life, for the world to love and to imitate." Within the next six months, however, Herndon's picture of Lincoln's childhood had changed considerably and he wrote to Hart *in 9* stating that he had it from Lincoln's own lips that his grandmother was a "half-way prostitute" and that his own mother "fell when un-married, fell afterwards." Herndon then advised Hart, "I am going to Kentucky to search this whole matter to the bottom and

TK  
Shortly after receiving this last letter from Herndon, Hart read the report of Townsend's interview, and the story about Lincoln's mother seemed to be so contradictory with the version which Herndon had written in a recent letter, that Hart wrote to Herndon about the inconsistency in the Nancy Hanks story. This was Herndon's reaction in part:

if false I shall scare some wicked men I assure you."

Hart rebelled at the adverse information about Lincoln's mother. Apparently saying, "It's all a lie," as the next Herndon letter implies. .

(woman)

"The letter contained a sentence which surprises you. Mr. Lincoln's own mother was a woman of very strong mind, it was not only strong but it was quick.... When Lincoln spoke to me as he did, he had reference to his mother's mind. Nothing else and it was thus I told it.... It is a fact that Nancy Hanks Lincoln's mother, was a superior woman in mind. There is no doubt of this and it was of that phase of Mrs. Lincoln that her son spoke to me; and the evidence before me is overwhelming on that special phase. As to morals that is another question."

A condensation of the book, "The Other Mother, appearing in the Readers Digest for February 1945 pays a well-deserved tribute to Sarah Johnston Lincoln, the revered stepmother of the President. It is to be regretted that the author did not have its original concept this traditional reference which Lincoln made to his own mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, "All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my mother." The author affirms that is this tribute, first related by William Herndon, Lincoln was referring to his step-mother, instead of his own mother.



Shorely after receiving this last letter from  
Henderson, I first read the <sup>the report of</sup> ~~Laurie's~~ ~~and~~ ~~where~~  
~~with~~ ~~Laurie's~~ ~~own~~ ~~particulars~~ ~~which~~ ~~was~~  
and the story about Laurie, which seemed to  
be so contradictory ~~with~~ the version which  
Henderson and I wrote in a recent letter, that I had  
wrote to Henderson about this inconsistency. ~~to~~  
~~that~~ ~~which~~ ~~was~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~letter~~.  
This was Henderson's reaction in fact:

In 1870 Hail wrote a biographical  
sketch of Lincoln and often commenting on the  
death of Haver. Haver Lincoln refers to her  
in part as "

"The mother of whom in after years  
I will hear in his ~~(Lincoln)~~ eyes, his (Lincoln) eyes;  
'all that I am or hope to be I owe to my  
ance mother.'"

In the paragraph which follows the  
statement about Henry Banks in the *Herald*  
city of March 2, 1867 he wrote, "Arnold's book is  
out!" but stated he had not read it. *Henderson* had  
been conversed with Arnold and also paid him  
a visit in Chicago, apparently Arnold was the first  
person to whom *Henderson* told the mother story  
as Arnold's book ~~the~~ *Lincoln and Slavery* although  
dated in 1866 apparently did not come out until  
early in 1867. It was probably the first cloth  
bound book to carry ~~the name of the publisher~~  
*Lincoln* but to his *publisher* the verses by Arnold  
will be obscure in the ~~following~~ *pages*; *Ames*;

The answer version

In the paragraph which follows the above  
with letter of March 21, 1867  
statement General wrote "Arnold's back is out."

" His mother died when he was ~~but~~ only  
ten years of age but she lived long enough  
to make a deep <sup>and lasting</sup> impression upon her son. He ever  
spoke of her with deep feeling and grateful affection.  
He said, with his eyes suffused with tears, "all that I am,  
or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."



The Samson version

"There was an interview of about three years before the  
"mother's ~~greatest~~ <sup>the next</sup> came up again for review in the ~~Harvard~~ <sup>from Harvard about the mother's question</sup>  
correspondence. This time the subject of the letter was ~~Harvard~~ <sup>Harvard</sup> H. Samson  
to whom ~~the~~ <sup>Harvard</sup> wrote on March 6, 1870 and revealed the occasion  
on which he claimed Lincoln made the ~~statement~~ <sup>famous</sup> about his mother.  
It was the incident of the famous Buggy ride variously placed  
by Harvard in 1750, 1851, and 1852. The story in fact follows.



"all that I am or hope ever to be I got  
from my mother. God bless her."

This fugue did occur in her lifetime - took  
place in 1851. - One would have to be blessed with a  
remarkable memory to recall this. - Ten years would be a long time  
to ~~remember the exact anniversary~~ which took place  
~~on any particular future to~~ on an occasion - hardly  
you before, ~~that~~ Herndon ~~just~~ made further  
comment however that "The manner of Lincoln  
I shall never forget - no what was said, nor the  
place, whatever may become of them"

The <sup>postscript</sup> line, comment printed in italics  
concludes with this statement:

"When Abraham Lincoln said, 'I all  
that I am I owe to my angel mother' he  
was speaking of his step mother."

" Mrs Lincoln was of middle size. Her black hair,  
hazel eyes, and was slender in form. No storm  
marks in making face."

She came made at 8, 15 made, at night 1, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/16, 1/32, 1/64, 1/128, 1/256, 1/512, 1/1024, 1/2048, 1/4096, 1/8192, 1/16384, 1/32768, 1/65536, 1/131072, 1/262144, 1/524288, 1/1048576, 1/2097152, 1/4194304, 1/8388608, 1/16777216, 1/33554432, 1/67108864, 1/134217728, 1/268435456, 1/536870912, 1/1073741824, 1/2147483648, 1/4294967296, 1/8589934592, 1/17179869184, 1/34359738368, 1/68719476736, 1/137438953472, 1/274877906944, 1/549755813888, 1/1099511627776, 1/2199023255552, 1/4398046511104, 1/8796093022208, 1/17592186044416, 1/35184372088832, 1/70368744177664, 1/140737488355328, 1/281474976710656, 1/562949953421312, 1/1125899906842624, 1/2251799813685248, 1/4503599627370496, 1/9007199254740992, 1/18014398509481984, 1/36028797018963968, 1/72057594037927936, 1/144115188075855872, 1/288230376151711744, 1/576460752303423488, 1/1152921504606846976, 1/2305843009213693952, 1/4611686018427387904, 1/9223372036854775808, 1/18446744073709551616, 1/36893488147419103232, 1/73786976294838206464, 1/147573952589676412928, 1/295147905179352825856, 1/590295810358705651712, 1/1180591620717411303424, 1/2361183241434822606848, 1/4722366482869645213696, 1/9444732965739290427392, 1/18889465931478580854784, 1/37778931862957161709568, 1/75557863725914323419136, 1/151115727451828646838272, 1/302231454903657293676544, 1/604462909807314587353088, 1/1208925819614629174706176, 1/2417851639229258349412352, 1/4835703278458516698824704, 1/9671406556917033397649408, 1/19342813113834066795298816, 1/38685626227668133590597632, 1/77371252455336267181195264, 1/154742504910672534362390528, 1/309485009821345068724781056, 1/618970019642690137449562112, 1/1237940039285380274899124224, 1/2475880078570760549798248448, 1/4951760157141521099596496896, 1/9903520314283042199192993792, 1/19807040628566084398385987584, 1/39614081257132168796771975168, 1/79228162514264337593543950336, 1/158456325028528675187087900672, 1/316912650057057350374175801344, 1/633825300114114700748351602688, 1/1267650600228229401496703205376, 1/2535301200456458802993406410752, 1/5070602400912917605986812821504, 1/10141204801825835211973625643008, 1/20282409603651670423947251286016, 1/40564819207303340847894502572032, 1/81129638414606681695789005144064, 1/162259276829213363391578010288128, 1/324518553658426726783156020576256, 1/649037107316853453566312041152512, 1/1298074214633706907132624082305024, 1/2596148429267413814265248164610048, 1/5192296858534827628530496329220096, 1/10384593717069655257060992658440192, 1/20769187434139310514121985316880384, 1/41538374868278621028243970633760768, 1/83076749736557242056487941267521536, 1/166153499473114484112975882535043072, 1/332306998946228968225951765070086144, 1/664613997892457936451903530140172288, 1/1329227995784915872903807060280344576, 1/2658455991569831745807614120560689152, 1/5316911983139663491615228241121378304, 1/10633823966279326983230456482242756608, 1/21267647932558653966460912964485513216, 1/42535295865117307932921825928971026432, 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"Mrs. Lincoln, the mother of Abraham was  
a woman about five feet seven inches ~~feet~~  
high; she had dark hair light hazel eyes,  
complexion light and exceedingly fair. ...  
was a woman known for the extraordinary strength  
of her mind among the family and all who knew  
her; she was superior to her husband in every way.  
She was a brilliant woman, a woman of  
great good sense and morality. Those who  
knew her best, with whom I have talked, say she  
was a woman of pale complexion, dark hair,

sharp features, high forehead, bright keen  
grey or hazel eyes.

Nat Gusby Sept 12 1863

Healy, p 353



Possibly we should first learn just what information Dennis released about Abraham Lincoln's paternal ancestry and just how much of what he said can be relied upon. It can be safely concluded that Dennis probably had few memories of the Lincolns in Kentucky. For about two years, 1809 and 1810, when Dennis was about ten years old, the Lincolns lived within a mile or two of his home, but during their remaining years in Kentucky from 1811 to 1816 when Dennis was growing up, the Lincolns lived on Knob Creek, ten miles away, quite a distance for very much visiting in those days.

With so much to be said in favor of Sarah  
*Walter Hunt Jones*  
Lincoln, it is ~~regrettable~~ that her fine achievements should  
be further accentuated at the expense of ~~Nanc~~, Hanks Lincoln,  
especially when the claim is based on a wholly untenable  
premise. The identity of the mother, to whom Lincoln is said  
to have referred ~~in the original statement~~, opens up again  
a mass of purely traditional data, which, because of its  
unreliable source, contributes little to the final de-  
ductions which can be made. However, the many queries  
which have come to the Foundation about the mother  
controversy almost necessitates this discussion.

The Journals version shows  
George Alfred Townsend "an accomplished  
poet, lecturer, and correspondent" visited Springfield  
Illinois on Jan 24 and 25, 1867. while on a circuit tour. ~~the~~  
~~person~~ He interviewed in Springfield ~~the~~ William  
Henderson, former law partner of Abraham Lincoln,  
a report of  
Townsend sent his interview to the New York  
Tribune, and ~~later~~ ~~how~~ ~~it~~ ~~published~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~Porter~~  
~~was~~ ~~published~~ ~~under~~ ~~the~~ ~~caption~~ ~~"The Real Life of Abraham Lincoln"~~  
story carries the first information we have been able to discover  
about this contains the first printed  
from of the ~~facts~~ which Henderson claimed  
Lincoln passed to his mother. The following  
paragraph contains the statement relating to  
the version in which the expression in question was used.

— Later the <sup>article</sup> ~~interview~~ was published in a fifteen  
page booklet under the caption The Real Life of  
Abraham Lincoln, as far as we can learn <sup>there is</sup> ~~it is~~  
the first publication which attempted to <sup>name the</sup> ~~create the~~  
individual <sup>who put the circulation</sup> ~~the famous~~ <sup>is said to have</sup> ~~statement~~ <sup>made a point</sup>  
~~origin of~~ his work. The following paragraph contains  
the <sup>notation</sup> ~~statement~~ relating to the interview in which  
the expression in question is used.



## The Hart version

Before Townsend interviewed Herndon, the latter had  
less than a year after Lincoln died Herndon, ~~but~~ <sup>has</sup> ~~been carrying on~~ <sup>been carrying on</sup> ~~his own~~ <sup>his own</sup> ~~pasture~~ <sup>pasture</sup>,  
began a voluminous correspondence with Charles H. Hart, a Lincoln author.

On April 13, 1866, Herndon wrote, "Oh what an admirable sweet  
good boyish record 'Abe' has left behind, i.e., his childhood  
life, for the world to love and to imitate." Within the next  
six months, however, Herndon's picture of Lincoln's childhood  
had changed considerably and he wrote to Hart stating that he had it from  
Lincoln's <sup>own lips that his</sup> ~~own lips that his~~ ~~own lips that his~~ <sup>own lips that his</sup> ~~told him fifteen years before that Lincoln's~~ <sup>told him fifteen years before that Lincoln's</sup> ~~grandmother was a "half-way prostitute" and that Lincoln's~~ <sup>grandmother was a "half-way prostitute" and that Lincoln's</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup>  
own mother "fell when un-married, fell afterwards." Herndon  
then advised Hart, "I am going to Kentucky to search this  
whole matter to the bottom and if false I shall scare some  
wicked men I assure you." Hart rebelled at this <sup>adverse</sup> ~~information~~ <sup>information</sup> ~~about Lincoln's mother~~ <sup>about Lincoln's mother</sup>



"Nancy, Hanks was as far above Thomas  
Lynch as an angel is above mud. It is  
said that she didn't care anything for Thomas, ...  
she was a great noble woman; a woman of  
a very fine cast of mind; was a broad-minded  
liberal, generous-hearted, quickly sympathetic  
woman; a woman far above her  
surroundings, meditative, introspective, sad,  
daring, fearless, and in some cases  
indiscreet."

Truman H.  
Fuller Bartlett  
A

"I once saw a letter published. It was in  
some Kentucky paper, in which Miss Banks  
was described as a 'cheerful, rollicking,  
daring, reckless "gal" breaking through  
all rules of propriety and of forms etc. in  
society, and that she became sad while in  
Indiana."

Letter to Wink

Feb 9 1887

p 170

The reputation of Mrs Lincoln is that she was a bold, reckless, dandified kind of a woman, stepping to the very verge of propriety; she was badly and roughly raised, was an excellent woman and by nature an intellectual and sensitive woman."

Let to work Jan 19, 1886

"It is a fact that Nancy Hanks, Lincoln's mother was a superior woman in mind. There is no doubt of this, and it was of that phase of Mrs Lincoln that her son spoke to me; and the evidence before me is overwhelming in that special phase. As to morals, that is another question."

Letter to Hart Mar 2 1867

"Mrs Lincoln was a very smart, intelligent, and  
cultured woman; she was naturally strong, energetic;  
was a gentle, kind, and tender woman, a Christian of  
the Baptist persuasion, she was a remarkable woman  
truly and indeed."

William Ward to Hamilton

P 364

Sept 11, 1865



1  
Haf 5-10-1940

2)

light complexion

dark hair

short features

light features

light features

light complexion, light eyes

light complexion

1)

5'11" under 160

dark hair

light hair, eyes

light complexion, exceedingly fair

Hendon

fine cast of mind

excellent heart

gentle in sympathy

a natural leader

a good neighbor

a firm friend

very sensible and sometimes glowing

Hendon Mrs.

between 1866-1871

Holland.

5 ft slender tree

glundis

pale

soil

sensitive wound

John H. H. (Lamborn 71)

slender symmetrical waves  
medium stature  
brunette with dark hair  
regular features

soft sparkling large eyes

unduly tired might have been bauld  
hard labor & hard usage bent her handsome form  
and imparted an unbecoming coarseness  
to her features long before the period of  
her death."

## Barton

" tall slender

dark skinned woman

little yellow area in center of stomach

unusually high forehead.

Ordinary, changed

times when her face was red

slipping back



J 17 Barnett.

---

" Slight in form

~~rather above average height~~

rather above the medium height of  
her sex;

features regular

her hair dark

brown eyes ~~bright~~ & gentle

trace of ludicrous

vein of pleasantry in talk

Wanderer  
Age 23 or 1 year old

Abundant, dark, bright.

Weight 130 pounds

Stoutly built

appears to incline to consumption

skin was dark. ~~hair brown~~

hair brown

eyes grey and small

forehead prominent

face sharp and angular

marked expression of melancholy

life dominated by spirit of sadness

disposition amiable and

generous

Vaults

Cheng's dispositive

Nancy Hanks description

p 344

p 354

p 138-139



Saddle Ridge

Nancy Hanks

March 27

Dear Sir  
I see in the Papers you want a record of  
Nancy Hanks mother of Abraham Lincoln.  
I don't know anything about her relations but  
she died in Poverty in the fields of Southern<sup>1816</sup>  
Indiana in a rude floorless hut the wind  
forming the crevices in the wall a mother died  
she was of lowly birth. she was the Victim  
of Poverty and hard Usage for months she  
she had been stooped and punched and  
miserable she knew she was going to die  
there was no Doctor in 35 miles the little children  
heart Broken stood by her bedside weeping  
admonition, to love their kindred and worship  
God. Out of rude boards hewn from the  
forest the husband and father made a  
coffin and with no ceremony other than the  
sobs of that motherless boy and girl



aged 9. 11. years by name Sarah & Abraham the earth  
closed over that fold and fragile form forever  
little did that Mother think that ragged  
hapless boy was destined to become the liberator  
of a race of men. to my mind the saddest  
most sorrowful most pathetic incident in  
all History is the Death and burial of  
the Mother of Abraham Lincoln.

Poor Nancy she died 1818 in the Wilderness  
in Southern Indiana in a little hut

lots of kids have asked me about Abraham Lincoln  
Mother but i could not tell them that she  
died in the worst Poverty that was ever  
known of. i might let it out some day  
but i don't feel like it now —

J. Goddard  
19 Puritan Ave  
Worcester Mass

"Nancy Hanks must have worn dresses of linsey-woolsey, a combination of linen and wool. They were no fashion models, for this was a coarse cloth, and made heavy garments. Clothes on the frontier were more a matter of necessity than of vanity. She may have worn shoes made of leather tanned by one of her male relatives, or moccasins. The probability is that most of the time she went barefoot, like other frontier women, to save shoe leather. If she found a ribbon or a treasured shawl, or some other bit of finery stowed away among her mother's, or an aunt's, possessions, and wanted to see how it became her, she could go down to the spring and look at herself in the clear water, like other frontier lasses. Mirrors were almost unknown."

Briggs, Harold E., & Briggs, Ernestine B. Nancy Hanks Lincoln. 52-53 pp.

#### DEATH OF LINCOLN'S MOTHER

"A great man," says J. G. Holland, "never drew his infant life from a purer or more womanly bosom than her own; and Mr. Lincoln always looked back to her with unsp. & able affection. Long after her sensitive heart and weary hand had crumbled into dust, and had climbed to life again in forest flowers, he said to a friend, with tears in his eyes: 'All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother — blessings on her memory.'"

She was five feet and five inches high, a slender, a pale, sad, and sensitive woman, with much in her nature that was truly heroic, and much that shrank from the rude life around her.

Her death occurred in 1818, scarcely two years from her removal from Kentucky to Indiana. They laid her to rest under the trees near her cabin home, and, sitting on her grave, the little boy wept his irreparable loss.

There was a time when the burial place of a race horse named for Nancy was given more attention than the grave of the President's mother. But this has all been changed within the past few years and the simple but appropriate stone which marks her grave is the magnetic center of a vast area which has been set apart as the Nancy Lincoln Memorial Park.



Barton - Lucy

## Rev. William E. Barton Declares Kentucky Records Show Truth of Lucy Hanks Legend.

### 2ND GRANDMOTHER FOUND

#### Bathsheba Herring Lincoln Said to Be Only Wife of Original Abraham.

Chicago, Feb. 3 [By Associated Press].—In delving after knowledge relative to the maternal grandmother of Abraham Lincoln, Rev. William E. Barton, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Oak Park, Chicago suburb, and author of numerous books, one of which was on Lincoln, states that he has found data which definitely identifies Lincoln's paternal grandmother, known among historians as "Lincoln's lost grandmother."

Rev. Barton states in his paper, which was read to an invited audience of scholars, historians, judges and theologians here today, that he realizes he is disputing eminent authorities and declaring distinguished writers on the subject to be in error. The meeting was not open to the public, not all the members even of the Chicago Historical Society, under whose auspices the paper was given, being invited.

In producing the two grandmothers, Rev. Barton states that "all the biographies of Abraham Lincoln are incorrect as to his paternal grandmother." Dr. Barton said in part:

#### Two Last Grandmothers.

"I have promised to bring to this meeting the lost grandmother of Abraham Lincoln. I am prepared to produce not one but two. All the biographies of Abraham Lincoln are incorrect as to his paternal grandmother. She was not Mary Shipley, as Nicolay and Hay, on the authority of J. R. Hall, have told us, nor was she of the Boone family, as Gideon Welles, Lincoln's Secretary of War, maintained. Nor was the pioneer Abraham Lincoln twice married, once to Mary Shipley, mother of his two eldest sons, and later to Bathsheba Harrington, mother of Thomas. The marriage licenses of Virginia sometimes gave the name of the groom and omitted that of the bride. So was it with the record of Abraham Lincoln, the President's grandfather. His license to marry was issued in Rockingham county, Va., June 9, 1770, and the bride is not named. When Abraham Lincoln was selling his farm in Virginia, February 18, 1780, preparatory to removal to Kentucky, his wife, Bathsheba, signed the deed, and on September 8, 1781, relinquished her dower rights. She was not well at the time and could not ride 12 miles to the Courthouse, so a commission was sent to acknowledge her relinquishment. It has been supposed that Bathsheba was a second wife, Mary Shipley being the first. Then, when it was found that this could not be, it was supposed that Bathsheba died in 1781 and Abraham Lincoln married Mary Shipley as his

second wife. Last summer, in a pile of old tax lists in the basement of the old Capitol at Frankfort, the secretary of the Kentucky Historical Society discovered a list of Washington county for 1795, which shows that Bathsheba Lincoln survived her husband. Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the President, was murdered by Indians, not in 1784, as the President thought, but in May, 1786, and his widow long survived him. Here, then, is the paternal grandmother of President Lincoln, Bathsheba, whom the pioneer Abraham Lincoln married in Rockingham county, Va., in 1770, the mother of all his children, his one and only wife. All the books are in error; they must henceforth be corrected. This is the first announcement of the discovery.

"But Bathsheba (whose name may or may not have been Herring) is not the grandmother we are setting out to discover, we include her for good measure. We are after the mother of Nancy Hanks. Here we confront a historical problem of the very greatest difficulty, and one which many books have darkened by words without knowledge.

#### The Hanks Tradition.

"The Hanks tradition, as given by Lemon, Herndon, and accepted by Nicholas and Hay, is thus given:

"Mrs. Lincoln's mother was named Lucy Hanks; her sisters were Betty, Polly and Nancy, who married Thomas Sparrow, Jesse Friend and Levi Hall. The childhood of Nancy was passed with the Sparrows, and she was oftener called by their name than her own. The whole family connection was composed of people so little given to letters that it is hard to determine the proper relationships of the younger members, said the "Tangle of Traditional Courtships,"—Abraham Lincoln, A history; by Nicolay and Hay, vol. 1, p. 24.

Dr. Barton then proceeded to an intricate and detailed analysis of the evidence as preserved in the Hanks family, and declared that there must have been a fourth and older daughter, married and away from home, at the time of the making of the will of Joseph Hanks, and for some reason omitted from it. Joseph Hanks was an illiterate and a dying man, and the will was made by a lawyer, who either by mistake or for some reason not stated gave the names of only three daughters, and devised a heifer to each of them. He continued:

"Not only so, but I have been able to secure copies of marriage bonds of all the original Sparrow family and most of the Hanks family, including the marriage of Thomas Sparrow not to Elizabeth Shipley, who appears never to have existed, but to Elizabeth Hanks; and they were not the parents of Dennis Hanks, whose mother was the Nancy named in the will of Joseph Hanks. As for Lucy, I have her marriage bond in photostat, and a certificate of her legal marriage. She was married to Henry Sparrow, a revolutionary soldier and an honest man, and she brought up her children well, including two ministers of the gospel. She is no disgrace to the family. She had somewhat superior advantages. Her father and her brothers could not write but she, like all the Hankses who could write at all, wrote with a flourish. Thus do we restore to her rightful place on the line of the President's ancestors, Lucy Hanks, Abraham Lincoln's lost grandmother."



# Lincoln and His Mother.

On the subject of his ancestry and origin I only remember one time when Mr. Lincoln ever referred to it. It was about 1850, when he and I were driving in his one horse buggy to the court in Menard county, Ills. The suit we were going to try was one in which we were likely, either directly or collaterally, to touch upon the subject of hereditary traits. During the ride he spoke for the first time in my hearing of his mother, dwelling on her characteristics and mentioning or enumerating what qualities he inherited from her. He said, among other things, that she was the daughter of Lucy Hanks and a well bred but obscure Virginia farmer or planter, and he argued that from this last source came his power of analysis, his logic, his mental activity, his ambition and all the qualities that distinguished him from the other members and descendants of the Hanks family.

Abraham Lincoln, the grandfather of the president, emigrated to Jefferson county, Ky., from Virginia, about 1780, and from that time forward the former state became an important one in the history of the family, for in it was destined to be born its most illustrious member. About five years before this a handful of Virginians had started across the mountains for Kentucky, and in the company, besides their historian, William Calk, whose diary recently came to light, was one Abraham Hanks. They were evidently a crowd of jolly young men bent on adventure and fun, but their sport was attended with frequent

disasters. Their journey began at "Mr. Frige's tavern on the Rapidan." When only a few days out, "Hanks' dog's leg got broke." Later in the course of the journey Hanks and another companion became separated from the rest of the party and were lost in the mountains for two days.

In crossing a stream "Abraham's saddle turned over and his load all fell in Indian creek." Finally they meet their brethren from whom they have been separated and then pursue their way without further interruption. Returning emigrants whom they meet, according to the journal of Calk, "tell such news of the Indians" that certain members of the company are "afraid to go any further." The following day more or less demoralization takes place among the members of this pioneer party when the announcement is made, as their chronicler so faithfully records it, that "Philip Drake bakes bread without washing his hands." This was an unpardonable sin, and at it they revolted. A day later the record shows that "Abram turns back." Beyond this we shall never know what became of Abraham Hanks, for no further mention of him is made in this or any other history. He may have returned to Virginia and become, for aught we know, one of the president's ancestors on the maternal side of the house; but, if so, his illustrious descendant was never able to establish the fact or trace his lineage satisfactorily beyond the first generation which preceded him. He never mentioned who his maternal grandfather was, if indeed he knew.

## His Mother's Maiden Name.

Dennis and John Hanks have always insisted that Lincoln's mother was not a Hanks, but a Sparrow. Both of them wrote to me that such was the fact. Their object in insisting on this is apparent when it is shown that Nancy Hanks was the daughter of Lucy Hanks, who afterward married Henry Sparrow. It will be observed that Mr. Lincoln claimed his mother was a Hanks.

The maternity of Abraham Lincoln

Aunt Nancy and Uncle Tom were married regular but his  
(Abraham Lincoln) mother was an illegitimate child.

Atlantic Monthly Jan to June 1930  
page 308 Morgan

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A daughter of Richard Perry Sr. had married into the Hanks family in Virginia the issue being one child a girl named Nancy, when her father died the widow Lucy moved to Kentucky with her brothers in law where she married a second time, this husband being Henry Sparrow.

Lincoln the Citizen p 11 Whitney

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(Lincoln)

He said among other things that she was the illegitimate daughter of Lucy Hanks and a well bred Virginia farmer or planter.

p.3 Herndon

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The father of Nancy Hanks is no other than a Virginia planter, large farmers, of the highest and best blood of Virginia; and it is just here that Nancy got her good rich blood tinged with genius. Herndon

p 52 Barton

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Lucy, the mother of Nancy married Henry Sparrow. Nancy was taken and raised by Thomas and Betsy Sparrow.

Herndon

p 54 Barton

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Nancy Hanks mother of the president at a very early age was taken from her mother Lucy - afterwards married to Henry Sparrow, and sent to live with her aunt and uncle Thomas and Betsy Sparrow.

p 13 Herndon

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Later they deepened the stain of his mothers name (Nancy was by hinting that she herself was a waif - fatherless like her boy.

p xi Hitchcock

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Joseph Hanks had eight living children to whom he bequeathed property. The youngest of these was my daughter Nancy as the will puts it.

p. xv Hitchcock

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(At all events the two cousins ~~was~~ (Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks) became engaged.

p 10 Tarbell



# NO "BAR SINISTER" IN LINCOLN FAMILY

**Ida M. Tarbell Shows How the Grave Wrong Done by Tradition to the Liberator's Father and Mother Was Totally Without Foundation.**

By Ida M. Tarbell.

**A**MONG the many wrongs of history—and they are legion—there is none in our American chapter at least which is graver than that which has been done the parents, and particularly the mother, of Abraham Lincoln. Of course, I refer to the widespread tradition that Lincoln was born of that class known in the south as "poor whites," that his father was not Thomas Lincoln, as his biographers insist on declaring, but a rich and cultured planter of another state than Kentucky, and that his mother not only gave a fatherless boy to the world, but herself was a nameless child. The tradition has always lacked particularity.

For instance, there has been large difference of opinion about the planter who fathered Abraham, who he was and where he came from. One story calls him Enloe, another Calhoun, another Hardin, and several different states claim him. Only five years ago a book was published in North Carolina to prove that Lincoln's father was a resident of that state. The bulk of the testimony offered in this instance came from men and women who had been born long after Abraham Lincoln, had never seen him, and never heard the tale they repeated until long after his election to the presidency.

Of the truth of these statements as to Lincoln's origin no proof has ever been produced. They were rumors, diligently spread in the first place by those who for political purposes were glad to belittle a political opponent. They grew with telling, and, curiously enough, two of Lincoln's best friends helped perpetuate them—Messrs. Lamon and Herndon—both of whom wrote lives of the president which are of great interest and value. But neither of these men was a student, and they did not take the trouble to look for records of Mr. Lincoln's birth. They accepted rumors and enlarged upon them. Indeed, it was not until perhaps twenty-five years ago that the matter was taken up seriously and an investigation begun. This has been going on at intervals ever since, until I venture to say that few persons born in a pioneer community, as Lincoln was, and as early as 1809, have their lineage on both sides as clearly established as that of Abraham Lincoln.

It takes, indeed, a most amazing credulity for any one to believe the stories I have alluded to after having looked at the records of his family. Lincoln himself, backed by the record in the Lincoln family bible, is the first authority for the time and place of his birth, as well as the name of his father and mother. The father, Thomas Lincoln, far from being a "poor white," was the son of a prosperous Kentucky pioneer, a man of honorable and well-established lineage who had come from Virginia as a friend of Daniel Boone, and had there bought large tracts of land and begun to grow up with the country where he was killed by the Indians. He left a large family.

By the law of Kentucky the estate went mainly to the oldest son, and the youngest, Thomas Lincoln, was left

to shift for himself. The youngest son grew to manhood, and on June 10, 1806, was married, at Beechland, Ky., to a young woman of a family well known in the vicinity, Nancy Hanks. There is no doubt whatever about the time and the place of their marriage. All the legal documents required in Kentucky at that period for a marriage are in existence. Not only have we the bond and the certificate, but the marriage is duly entered in a list of marriage returns made by Jesse Head, one of the best-known early Methodist ministers of Kentucky. It is now to be seen in the records of Washington county, Kentucky. There is even in existence a very full and amusing account of the wedding and the fanfare which followed by a guest who was present, and who for years after was accustomed to visit Thomas and Nancy. This guest, Christopher Columbus Graham, a unique and perfectly trustworthy man, a prominent citizen of Louisville, died only a few years ago.

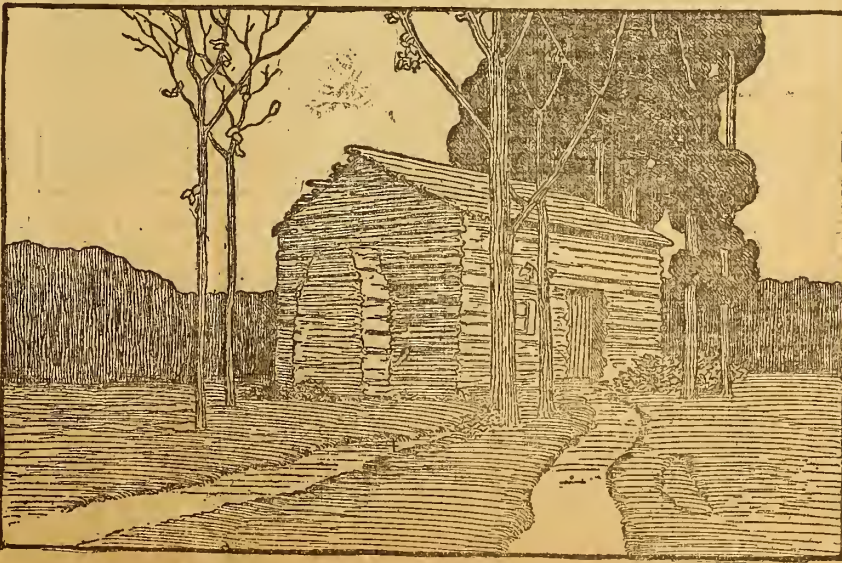
But while these documents dispose effectually of the question of the parentage of Lincoln, they do not, of course, clear up the shadow which hangs over the parentage of his mother. Is there anything to show that Nancy Hanks herself was of as clear and clean lineage as her husband? There had been nothing whatever until a few years ago, through the efforts of Mrs. Caroline Hanks Hitchcock of Cambridge, Mass., who had in preparation the genealogy of the Hanks family in America, a little volume was published, showing what she had established in regard to Nancy Hanks. Mrs. Hitchcock had begun at the far end of the line—the arrival of one Benjamin Hanks in Massachusetts in 1699.

She discovered that one of his sons, William, moved to Virginia, and that

in the latter part of the eighteenth century his children formed in Amelia county of that state a large settlement. All the records of these families she found in the Hall of Records in Richmond. When the migration into Kentucky began, late in the century, it was joined by many members of the Hanks settlement in Amelia county. Among others to go was Joseph Hanks with his wife, Nancy Shipley Hanks, and their children. Mrs. Hitchcock traced this Joseph Hanks, by means of land records, to Nelson county, Kentucky, where she found that he died in 1793, leaving behind a will, which she discovered in the records of Bardstown, Ky. This will shows that at the time of his death Joseph Hanks had eight living children, to whom he bequeathed property. The youngest of these was "My daughter Nancy," as the will puts it.

Mrs. Hitchcock's first query, on reading this will, was: "Can it be that this little girl—she was but 9 years old when her father died—is the Nancy Hanks who sixteen years later became the mother of Abraham Lincoln?" She determined to find out. She learned from relations and friends of the family of Joseph Hanks still living that, soon after her father's death, Nancy went to live with an uncle, Richard Berry, who, the records showed, had come from Virginia to Kentucky at the same time that Joseph Hanks came. A little further research, and Mrs. Hitchcock found that there had been brought to light thru the efforts of friends of Abraham Lincoln all the documents to show that in 1806 Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln were married at Beechland, Ky. Now, one of these documents was a marriage bond. It was signed by Richard Berry, the uncle of the little girl recognized in the will of Joseph Hanks. Here, then, was the chain complete. The marriage bond and marriage returns not only showed that Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln were married regularly three years before the birth of Abraham Lincoln, thus settling forever at rest the story of Lincoln's illegitimacy, but they showed that this Nancy Hanks was the one named in the will. The suspicion in regard to the origin of Lincoln's mother was removed by this discovery of the will, for the recognition of any one as his child by a man in his will is considered by the law as sufficient proof of paternity.

Now what sort of people were Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks? It has



THE LOG CABIN IN WHICH LINCOLN WAS BORN.



been inferred by those who have made no investigation of Thomas Lincoln's life that Nancy Hanks made a very poor choice of a husband. The facts do not entirely warrant this theory. Thomas Lincoln had been forced from his boyhood to shift for himself in a young and undeveloped country. He is known to have been a man who in spite of this wandering life contracted no bad habits. He was temperate and honest, and his name is recorded in more than one place in the records of Kentucky. He was a churchgoer, and, if tradition may be believed, a stout defender of his peculiar religious views. He held advanced ideas of what was already an important public question in Kentucky, the right to hold negroes as slaves. One of his old friends has said of him and his wife, Nancy Hanks, that they were "just steeped full of notions about the wrongs of slavery and the rights of men, as explained by Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine." These facts show that he must have been a man of some natural intelligence. He had a trade and owned a farm.

That the two people who endured its hardships and made in spite of them a home where a boy could conceive and nourish such ideals and enthusiasms as inspired Abraham Lincoln from his early years should have their names darkened by unfounded suspicions is a cruel injustice against which every honest and patriotic American ought to set his face. If in carrying out the noble project of making a national park of the Kentucky farm where Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks made their first home the directors do nothing more than to set forth the facts of the parentage of Abraham Lincoln they will justify their undertaking.

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of age and give my assent  
and ratification freely for Henry  
I borrow to get out Lissons  
this or any other day  
given me in my hand  
this day <sup>the</sup> April 26 1790  
Witness Robert Lucey  
Michael Hanks  
John Berry  
+



I do certify that I am  
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John Barry

## SLANDERING THE MOTHER OF LINCOLN.

It has remained for Henry Watterson, full of years and full of honors as a citizen and member of his profession, to kill as contemptible and deplorable a slander as ever fell from human lips. The story that Abraham Lincoln was a "love-child," that Nancy Hanks, his mother, was not married at the time she brought him into the world.

This vicious and damnable falsehood has become current through the extraordinary efforts of scandal-mongers in certain spectacular fields of so-called literature. They have spread it up and down America; in Seattle, on the hundredth anniversary of the Great Emancipator's birth, it was whispered to and fro, until its insistent utterance and persistent repetition brought the flush of anger and the blush of shame to upright manhood and womanhood; and now it has gone across the international line, to be repeated there by lips accustomed first to speak the lie and then grope blindly after the truth.

That Henry Watterson comes on the scene at this particular time is indeed fortunate. It is almost a blessing that this man, himself an actor in the scenes that brought Lincoln to the front, is able to speak now, plainly, emphatically, authoritatively, convincingly. Watterson knows the life of the Lincolns, in detail, from the time his paternal ancestors in 1636 sailed from Yarmouth Harbor for America, and from the time a maternal ancestor fought under Cromwell; step by step Watterson brings the record down to date; and he settles the question forever, to the satisfaction of honest people. Abraham Lincoln was born in lawful wedlock; there is no stain attaching to his name, or to that of his mother, or his father, or his grandparents back to the remotest generation.

Watterson tells his story in *The Cosmopolitan* for March. He relates that he first met Lincoln in 1861; he stood beside the President as he delivered the inaugural address; and from that day to this he has known every scrap of history relating to Lincoln, for he not only kept pace with events as a working newspaper man, but he accumulated a vast mass of material with the intention of writing a life of the first martyr President.

"Nothing," says Watterson, "has been more misrepresented and misconceived than Lincoln's pedigree and birth. Some confusion was originally made by his own mistake touching the marriage of his father and mother, which had not been celebrated in Hardin County, but in Washington County, Kentucky, the absence of any marriage papers in the courthouse at Elizabethtown, the county seat of Hardin County, leading to the notion that there had never been any marriage at all. It is easy to conceive how such a discrepancy might occasion any amount and all sorts of campaign lying, these distorted accounts winning popular belief among the ignorant and inflamed. Lincoln himself died without knowing that he was born not only in honest wedlock, but of an ancestry upon both sides of which he had no reason to be ashamed."

The name of Lincoln came from excellent sources, and was borne by good people. The Lincolns were among those who overcrowded Norwich jail in England because "they would not accept the ritual prepared for them by the bishop"; who pelted the tax-collector with stones, and finally, in order to "rid themselves of an odious government," bravely sailed out of Yarmouth Harbor in 1636, crossed the ocean, and founded the colony of Hingham, in Massachusetts. Descendants of these landowners, wheelwrights, and ironmongers migrated southward into New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and at last into Kentucky. The Abraham Lincoln who was fifth in descent from Samuel Lincoln, of Hingham, and who had become owner of considerable tracts of land in Kentucky, fell by the bullet of a lurking Indian in the sight of his three boys, Mordecai, Joseph, and Thomas, the latter a 6-year-old lad who was saved by the timely crack of the rifle in the hands of his elder brother, to become the father of the future President.

Thomas Lincoln was not the irresponsible ne'er-do-well that most of the biographers of Lincoln have represented him. A fairer estimate has yet to be made. Nor was the Hanks family so obscure as used to be thought.

"For a long time," says Colonel Watterson, "a cloud hung over the name of Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. Persistent investigation has, however, brought about a vindication in every way complete. We owe this largely to the rescarches of three women, Mrs. Hobart Vawter, Mrs. Caroline Hanks Hitchcock, and Miss Ida M. Tarbell. Mrs. Vawter's grandmother was Sarah Mitchell, of Kentucky, a second cousin to Nancy Hanks. She it was who discovered the marriage bond of Thomas Lincoln and the marriage records of Jesse Head, the Methodist minister who officiated at the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, the 12th of June, 1806. Mrs. Hitchcock took upon herself the task of tracing the genealogy of the Hanks family, thus throwing a flood of light upon the maternal ancestry of Abraham Lincoln, and consequently upon the foundations of his character and genius."

It is related that two brothers of the name of Hanks received "the commoners' rights in Malmsbury" for service rendered in defeating the Danes, and we are told that the name of Alfred, was on the deed. Thomas Hanks, a descendant, who was a soldier under Cromwell, had a grandson who came to America in 1699. This Benjamin Hanks became the father of twelve children, the third of whom was William, born February 11, 1704; William migrated to Pennsylvania, and his son, John Hanks, married Sarah, a daughter of Cadwallader Evans and Sarah Morris. The record reads, "John Hanks, yeoman, Sarah Evans, spinster."

A grandchild of this union was Joseph Hanks, who was borne southeastward upon



the tide of emigration, headed by Daniel Boone. Joseph Hanks crossed the mountains with his family of eight children, horses, herds of cattle and household goods. He had bought 150 acres of land near Elizabethtown, Kentucky. The youngest of the eight children was little Nancy, who was 5 years of age when they left the Valley of Virginia. After four years of home-making in the wilderness, Joseph came to his death. His will, dated January 9, 1793, probated May 14, 1793, has been discovered, and a fac simile appears in Mrs. Hitchcock's book.

"This document," says Colonel Watterson, "settles once and forever the legitimacy of the parentage of Nancy Hanks. The mother survived the father but a few months, and the orphaned Nancy, then 9 years old, found a home with her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Berry, near Springfield, Kentucky, Mrs. Berry being her mother's sister. Here she lived, a happy and industrious girl, until she was 23 years of age, when Thomas Lincoln, who had learned his carpenter's trade of one of her uncles, married her on June 12, 1806. The whole official record is still in existence. The marriage bond, to the extent of 50 pounds, required by the laws of Kentucky at that time, signed by Thomas Lincoln and Richard Berry, was duly recorded seven days before.

"The wedding was celebrated as became prosperous country folk. The uncle and aunt gave an 'infare,' to which the neighbors were bidden. Dr. Christopher Columbus Graham, of Louisville, who died about 1885 (he was the father-in-law of the late Gov. Bramlette and of ex-United States Senator Blackburn, now governor of Panama), wrote at my request his remembrances of that festival and testified to this before a notary in the 98th year of his age. He said:

"I know Nancy Hanks to have been virtuous, respectable, and of good parentage, and I know Jesse Head, Methodist preacher of Springfield, who performed the ceremony. The house in which the ceremony was performed was a large one for those days. Jesse Head was a noted man—able to own slaves, but did not on principle. At the festival there was bear meat, venison, wild turkey, duck, and a sheep that two families had barbecued over the coals of wood burned in a pit and covered with green boughs to keep the juices in."

"The traditions of the neighborhood tell us that Nancy's disposition and habits were considered a dowry. She was an adept at spinning flax and at spinning parties, to which ladies brought their wheels, she generally bore away the palm, her spools yielding the longest and finest thread."

"She was above the average in education. She became a great reader, absorbed Aesop's Fables, loved the Bible and the hymn-book, possessed a sweet voice, and was fond of singing hymns. Old people remembered her as having a 'gentle and trusting nature.' A grandson of Joseph, Nancy's brother, once said to Joshua F. Speed, from whom it came to me:

"My grandfather always spoke of his angel sister Nancy with emotion. She taught him to read. He often told us children stories of their life together."

"The first child of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln was a daughter, Sarah. Three years after marriage arrived the boy, Abraham. Another son, named Thomas, was born; he lived but a few months, though long enough indelibly and tenderly to touch the heart of the elder brother. Before the Lincolns started to seek a new home in Indiana he remembered his mother taking him and his sister by the hand, walking across the hills, and sitting down and weeping over the grave of the little babe she was to leave behind forever.

"The last recorded words of Nancy Lincoln were words of cheer. A few days before her death she went to visit a sick neighbor. This neighbor was most despondent. She thought she would not live long. Said Mrs. Lincoln: 'Oh, you will live longer than I. Cheer up.' And so it proved. The dread milk sickness stalked abroad, smiting equally human beings and cattle. Uncle Thomas and Aunt Betsy Sparrow both died within a few days of each other. Soon the frail but heroic

mother was taken to bed. 'She struggled on day by day, but on the seventh day she died,' says the brief account. There was not a physician within thirty-five miles, no minister within a hundred miles. Placing her hand on the head of the little boy, nine years old, 'I am going away from you, Abraham,' she said, 'and I shall not return. I know that you will be a good boy, that you will be kind to Sarah and to your father. I want you to live as I have taught you and to love your Heavenly Father.'

"Thomas Lincoln sawed the boards with his whip-saw from the trees he felled, and with his own hands made the coffins for the Sparrows and for his wife.

"Pitiable story; one can scarce read it with dry eyes, but it lifts the veil forever from the cruel mystery which so long clouded the memory of Nancy Hanks. I here dwell upon it and give the details, because it ought to be known to every American who would have the truth of history fulfilled."

Such is the story of Lincoln's parentage as related by Henry Watterson—the Nestor of American journalists. All our people ought to read it, for it disposes finally of the vile tale given publicity by ten thousand unworthy tongues.

But what of those persons and publications who have viciously retailed this slander, without even taking the trouble to find the truth? What of newspapers like The News-Advertiser of Vancouver, B. C., which spreads this slander editorially before its readers. The kindest we can say is that if, on the one hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth, the editor could not have spoken tenderly and gently of that great soul, much better to have remained silent.

### Lincoln's Mother.

To the Editor: A lady requests me to give for publication (if I can do so) a sketch of the family of Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. She tells me she has read every history of Abraham Lincoln and considers it very strange that nothing has ever been written by the historians of the president's mother except that her name was Nancy Hanks.

The historians never made any effort to trace the pedigree of the family. Raymond, in his "Life and State Papers of Abraham Lincoln," declares nothing is known concerning her ancestry or early life. He merely mentions that she was a Virginian by birth.

The name Hanks is rare in America, yet we have a straighter line on the pedigree of the Hankses than we have of the Lincolns. Beyond the grandfather of Abe Lincoln we know absolutely nothing of the family pedigree.

The earliest account we have of the Hankses is their first appearance in Gloucester county, Va., in 1673. In deed book No. 6, land grants, page 472, 1673, is recorded the grant of 264 acres to Thomas Hanks. And on page 476, same year, 1673, is recorded a patent to Thomas Hanks for 500 acres. In the early colonial history of Virginia, a person who paid for the passage of a person who came to settle in Virginia was entitled to a land grant of several hundred acres. This was why he was given a grant of land. The patent of 500 acres which is recorded, was land paid for in cash or tobacco, which was the circulating medium in Virginia. In course of time the family increased and emigrated westward. We next hear of them in Orange county, 140 miles west of Gloucester. Among the marriages recorded in Orange Court House on March 26, 1803 is Rodney Hanks, son of Reuben and Elizabeth Hanks, to Alice Chandler. But they didn't stop at Orange Court House. We find a family of them in Rockingham county, Va., in 1790, and another in Shenandoah county. In 1780 Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of President Lincoln, removed to Kentucky from Rockingham county, Va., and we are certain that the Hanks family was with the Lincolns during that journey. The next account we have of the Hankses is in 1806. In that year in Kentucky, Thomas Lincoln (father of the president) married Nancy Hanks.

The next account of the Hankses was at the battle of Tippecanoe, in Indiana, Nov. 7, 1811. We find the names of Peter and James Hanks. Peter was killed. He was a member of Captain Berry's company of militia from Kentucky. James belonged to a company of mounted riflemen and was from Kentucky. They may have been brothers, and if so, I am certain they were the brothers of Nancy Hanks. In six years after the battle of Tippecanoe, Thomas Lincoln removed from Kentucky to Indiana. Dan Ford.

C. S. Hanks

WEIX



I do hereby that I am  
of age and give my self  
to the service of  
Robert Lacey for Henry  
I have now to get out Lisons  
this or every other day  
given me in my hand  
this day April 26 1730  
Wm Robert Lacey  
much  
Hank

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S LOST GRANDMOTHER  
Her one existing autograph. Discovered by the author



## Nancy Lincoln's Mark

*Lincoln Country, Indiana*  
**Will of Thomas Sparrow Found in  
Spencer Court Records  
By WPA**

WPA Headquarters, Indianapolis, July 13.—A thin sheet of yellowed paper with old fashioned script dimmed by years has just been found by Works Progress Administration women workers who were renovating the court files in the Spencer county court house at Rockport. It looked like any of the hundreds of documents they have been indexing and putting in order. But in the left hand corner they found something that made them gasp.

It read, "Nancy Lincoln, her mark." There, with a small x, the mother of Abraham Lincoln had affixed her signature as witness to a will. It was the testament of Thomas Sparrow, her uncle, who with his wife, Betsy Hanks Sparrow, had come to Spencer county from Kentucky in 1817, and made his home with the Lincolns. They also brought with them, Dennis Hanks, Nancy's cousin, who was the beneficiary of the will, and who lived with the Lincoln family many years.

Shortly after the will was attested in September, 1818, Thomas Sparrow died, a victim of the epidemic of "milk fever." His wife succumbed to the same disease shortly thereafter, and in the middle of October, 1818, Nancy Lincoln also died of the milk fever.

The document reads as follows:

"October 9th, 1818. This twenty-first day of September in the year Eighteen Hunderd and Eighteen, Thomas Sparrow is in perfect senses on this date above mentioned, that all the goods and chattels that the above mentioned Thomas Sparrow has is to belong to his wife, Elizabeth Sparrow, so that she can do as she pleases with until her death and after her death the whole of the property above mentioned is to fall to Dennis Hanks when he comes of age and that the above T. Sparrow has made chois of Thomas Carter to be his Executor for his effects above written this from under my hand and seal. Signed: David Casebier, Nancy Lincoln her mark, and Thomas Sparrow his mark."

Other valuable papers discovered by the WPA workers were probate records dating back to 1818, during which time the court was held in the home of Azel Dorsey, near Rockport.

The discovery of the Lincoln document came at the time when residents of southern Indiana are celebrating the Lincoln Country Summer Festival in the Lincoln Pioneer Village at Rockport. Here recently four buildings constructed by WPA workers during the past year was dedicated by Wayne Coy, state WPA administrator.—The Monitor, Grandview, Indiana.

# Lincoln's Mother

(Brooklyn Eagle)

Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks, was born in a cabin on Mikes Run, near Bolls Gap, in northern West Virginia, according to the report just adopted by a special commission in that state; the ground where the cabin once stood will, no doubt, in due course become a state park and will bear a copy of the original cabin. West Virginia has reason to covet the glory of counting Lincoln's mother a native of its soil.

Nancy Hanks lived and died obscure. Even in the primitive society of the old Alleghany borderland, simple as it was, there were others relatively exalted, important, beside whom she and hers counted as lowly. The unkind tradition of her illegitimacy has no firm base on which to stand, but neither has any other definite account of her extraction. Her fame has come too late to dispel the shadow of her obscurity.

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It is not wholly a misfortune for her memory that it should persist on the strength of one single and supreme fact.

This has been true of many exceptional men, though not of all. Perhaps a qualified student will some day give us a comparison of the characters of mothers' boys and of fathers' boys among the very great. Would not the men molded by mothers excel in certain of the traits that render the great not only important but beloved? As to this one can only speculate; but in any case, Nancy Hanks was an exceptional instance of the successful mother. She can not have dreamed, in her cabin'd seclusion, of the destinies that she was shaping; yet she shaped them. Those who came after have learned to revere her for the strange and splendid thing that she did in bearing and rearing a human being fit for greatness.

Nancy Hanks will never be known—but neither will she be soon forgotten. To women she will preserve the reminder of their intimate power over the child and of its possibilities; to men she will appear a rare example of the maternal influence that all men must honor. The state of West Virginia has acted with a true instinct in seeking her birthplace among the hills.

ing one of his debates with Stephen A. Douglas.

Speaking at Galesburg on the night of Oct. 7, 1858, Judge Douglas closed his speech with an attack on his opponent's career.

Lincoln, Douglas said, failed at everything he attempted—at farming, teaching, liquor selling and law—and now he was trying politics.

Abe arose and said that Douglas had presented an accurate picture.

"It's true—every word of it. I've tried a lot of things, but there's one thing that Douglas forgot. He told you that I sold liquor, but he didn't mention that, while I had quit my side of the counter, the judge had remained on his."

## Farm Troubled With Skunks

The reference to Douglas' well-known weakness brought hearty laughter from the audience.

During the early part of the Civil war a scandal in the War Department obliged Lincoln to appoint a new Secretary. Republican Senators called upon him and urged that he change the entire Cabinet of seven members. Lincoln told them this:

"An Illinois farmer was troubled with skunks. One night he went out with his shotgun and returned after one discharge. His wife asked him what luck he had had.

"Well," he said, "there were seven skunks—not one. I killed one with my first shot and he raised such a fearful smell that I decided to let the rest go away."

The Senators retired. One typical story shows Lincoln pitted against a glib orator, but a shallow thinker, in a court case. After hearing a number of irresponsible statements, Lincoln said:

"I never knew of but one thing which compared with my friend in this particular. In my keel-boating days, I ran across a trifling little steamboat, which had a 5-foot boiler and a 7-foot whistle, and every time it whistled the boat stopped."



